COLORADO MEDICAID LAUNCHES TELEHEALTH SERVICES

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DENVER – April 5, 2012 – The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (Department) announced today that telehealth services are now available to eligible Colorado Medicaid clients. Telehealth in the home allows a registered nurse to monitor a client's health status remotely via the phone, internet or other equipment transmitting data from the client's home to the home health agency. Telehealth is particularly beneficial for those clients living in rural or remote parts of Colorado who would need to travel great distances for routine medical monitoring. Telehealth enables the remote collection of vital signs such as weight, temperature, blood glucose, blood pressure, pulse and lung functions. Collection can often be made in real or near-real time.

"Telehealth services have been available in the private sector, now low-income Coloradans on Medicaid can benefit from this important technology," said Susan E. Birch, executive director. "Because of the ability to monitor vital signs in real or near-real time, telehealth can prevent unnecessary emergency room visits and reduce hospital readmissions. This is a great example of using technology to improve health outcomes and contain costs."

Telehealth is not limited to those living in remote locations. It's available to Medicaid eligible clients who meet the following criteria:

- Client must receive Home Health services from a provider who has opted to provide telehealth services;
- Client must have one or more of the following diagnoses:
 - o Congestive heart failure
 - o Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
 - o Asthma
 - o Diabetes;
- Client must require frequent and on-going disease monitoring/management;
- Client's home environment must be compatible for the use of the equipment; and
- Client or caregiver must be willing and able to comply with self vital sign monitoring.

The telehealth program is funded by the Colorado Foundation for Home Care Technology and Education from a \$224,000 grant received from the Colorado Health Foundation.

About the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing: The department administers the Medicaid and Child Health Plan *Plus* programs as well as a variety of other programs for low-income families, children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with disabilities. The mission of the department is to improve access to cost-effective, quality health care services for Coloradans. For more information about the department, please visit Colorado.gov/hcpf.